

Supervisor Romaine Launches Town Wide Water Safety Campaign to Help Prevent Drowning in Pools and at Beaches

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Town Law and Building departments to crack down on unsafe pools and hot tubs

Farmingville, NY - Heading into Memorial Day weekend, Supervisor Ed Romaine marked the unofficial start of the summer season by announcing that the Town will begin a crack down on unsafe backyard pools and hot tubs. During a press conference held at the Brookhaven Aquatic Center in Mastic, the Supervisor urged residents who own pools or hot tubs to take proper safety measures now to help prevent a water-related tragedy from occurring. As part of the crack down, pool and hot tub owners who are found to be in violation of the Town's Pool Safety Codes will be ticketed and fined. The Supervisor was joined at the press conference by Councilman Dan Panico, Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright, officials from the Town's Law and Building Departments and Bobby Hazen, founder of the Long Island Drowning Prevention Task Force.. Pictured left to right are Mr. Hazen, Councilwoman Cartright, Councilman Panico and Supervisor Romaine.

"Now is the time for homeowners to make sure they are compliant with all the safety requirements for a pools and hot tubs," said Supervisor Romaine. "Every summer, we hear the news about children drowning and the truth is that most of them could be prevented if the proper safety measures were taken. The goal here is to save lives and help families avoid a tragedy in their own back yards."

In 2009, then Suffolk County Legislator Romaine sponsored a resolution requiring retailers of swimming pools to post signs regarding state pool alarm laws.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury death among children 1 to 14 years old and fifth among all age groups.

"I commend Supervisor Romaine for taking action to help prevent drowning," said Mr. Hazen. "Most drownings occur in residential pools, so making sure they are safer and have the proper safety equipment is a great defense or layer of protection, but it's equally important that all children learn to swim at an early age, and they should never go near water without adult supervision. Adults should also learn CPR and have an emergency plan in place."

"Today we came together to remind parents about the dangers and statistics associated with residential pool

drowning," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico. "You can never be too aware when it comes to children and swimming pools."

Councilwoman Cartright said, "In order to prevent any further pool related tragedies, we must create layers of protection within our community. Not only should we properly secure our pools and closely supervise our children at all times, but we must be prepared to deal with emergency situations. Remember, being adequately prepared can save lives. We hope that the information provided will help residents have a safe and happy summer."

The Supervisor urges homeowners to inspect their pool and hot tub areas now and correct any violations that currently exist before the summer begins. He also noted that Brookhaven Town Law and Building Department officials will respond to any complaints about potential violations in the neighborhood. "An unsafe pool or hot tub is a threat to every family that lives nearby, so it's important that people are aware of the danger and report it immediately to the Town," said Supervisor Romaine.

The Town of Brookhaven and New York State building codes include very specific rules and regulations regarding swimming pool and hot tub safety such as pool alarms, secure fencing, anti-entrapment devices, self-closing and self-latching gates. These are not merely suggestions; they are required by everyone who has an above ground or in-ground pool, or hot tub.

A detailed summary of pool and hot tub safety requirements can be found at the New York State Department of State website at www.dos.ny.gov/DCEA/pools.htm .

For more information about drowning prevention, visit the Long Island Drowning Prevention Task Force website at www.lidptf.org . If any resident knows of a backyard pool or hot tub that is not in compliance with Town codes, call 631-451-TOWN (8696). The Town will take immediate action against violators and keep identities of callers confidential. Visit www.brookhaven.org for more information about pool safety compliance.

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